



February 5, 2007

Representative Scott Mendenhall
Business and Labor Committee
House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 172
Helena, MT 59620

Chairman Mendenhall and Members of the Committee:

We are pleased to support this legislation to require that only cigarettes meeting a strict fire safety standard may be sold in the state.

Cigarettes are the leading cause of fire death in Montana and in the United States. Cigarette fires also cause tremendous financial losses, including property damage, insurance payouts, and emergency room and burn-care unit costs.

Senior citizens, very young children and other non-smokers are disproportionately the victims of cigarette fires. Firefighters are needlessly endangered by preventable cigarette fires.

The issues of cigarette fires and ways of reducing cigarette-ignition propensity have been studied extensively for more than 20 years by two Congressional study groups, government agencies, standard-setting organizations and private businesses.

In 2000 New York State enacted legislation to establish a cigarette fire safety standard. New York's regulation went into effect in June 2004. The preliminary data shows that New York substantially reduced the incidence of cigarette caused fires and cigarette fire deaths as a result of this groundbreaking law. A study by the Harvard School of Public Health showed that the cost of cigarettes to consumers in New York did not increase, nor did state tobacco tax revenues drop as a result of New York's cigarette fire safety law.

The states of California, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont, as well as Canada, have adopted the New York cigarette fire safety test method and standard contained in this legislation.

In New York almost 1,000 different cigarette styles have been certified as meeting the state's reduced ignition propensity test and standard. The vast majority (if not all) of

these cigarettes use a banded paper technology that places bands of thicker paper at locations around the barrel of the cigarette. These bands, often referred to as "speed bumps," deny air to the cigarette so that it goes out when not being actively puffed. The first patent for banded tobacco paper was issued in 1979 to paper company Schweitzer-Maudit.

This legislation would adopt the New York test method and standard and require that cigarettes meet the safety requirements and be marked to indicate compliance in order to be sold in Montana. Cigarettes certified and marked for sale in New York could be sold in the state without modification. A "sell through" provision would allow non-complying cigarettes that were purchased prior to the statute's effective date to sell off existing inventory of their conventional cigarettes. The law would take effect in the thirteenth month after enactment.

We're pleased to support HB461 as it is important, life saving legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nanette Gilbertson".

Nanette Gilbertson
American Cancer Society Lobbyist